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FM AMEMBASSY TALLINN

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1094

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TALLINN 000090

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/NB AND EUR/RPM

ALSO FOR SCA/AND S/SRAP

NSC PLEASE PASS TO JEFF HOVENIER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL MOPS EAIF NATO AF EN

SUBJECT: ESTONIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: CDA Karen Decker for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

REF: (A) TALLINN 86  
(B) STATE 31102  
(C) STATE 29482

¶11. (U) This is an action request. See paras 5, 9 and 10.

¶12. (C) MFA Undersecretary Harri Tiido officially informed the Charge on April 2 that the GOE has decided it will 1) deploy an Estonian platoon to Afghanistan for elections security and 2) move forward with plans to fold an Estonian contribution into an ETT in Afghanistan (with the aim of turning it into a joint U.S.-Estonian OMLT in the future.) Prime Minister Ansip will announce these plans during his speech on April 4 at the NATO Summit. Tiido said the GOE is looking for a clear signal of political support from the U.S. for the PM's announcement.

¶13. (C) Pol/Econ Chief and DATT met later in the day with Christian-Marc Liflander, MOD Director for Policy Planning, Riho Rongelep, MOD Director for Operations and Paul Teesalu, MFA Director for Security Policy to discuss specifics on the way ahead on these Afghanistan deployments.

¶14. (C) As noted Ref A, deployment of an additional platoon to Afghanistan to support the August elections will require approval by the Estonian parliament. This process will take at minimum 2 months and needs to begin immediately. MOD wants to have a draft legislative package ready for Defense Minister Aaviksoo's review by no later than April 13. To meet this timeline, MOD requested urgent feedback from the U.S. - including on how and where an Estonian platoon can best be used for elections support. MOD specifically requested the following:

-- Confirmation that the U.S. views an Estonian platoon as useful;

-- Help in transporting the Estonian platoon to/from Afghanistan;

-- Specifics to define the mission, timeframe and location of deployment.

¶15. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department provide responses to these questions as soon as possible. DATT

will also convey this request through DAO channels.

¶ 6. (C) MOD also confirmed that Estonia is looking to contribute to an ETT this year. MOD noted that while "no political decision has been taken yet," the MOD wants to begin discussions with the United States on scheduling. MOD needs to look at various options to get 5-6 people on the ground by the end of the year and start preparations for additional contributions by the second half of 2010. Estonia has sent several observers to Germany to observe NATO-provided OMLT training. Rongelep commented that the Estonian military had observed that the participants in the Latvian OMLT are "spread out." He noted the Estonian military would prefer Estonian contributions to an ETT (and later OMLT) be concentrated in one location. However, MOD stressed, this is NOT a political constraint on deployment.

¶ 7. (C) For both the elections support platoon and the ETT/OMLT, Liflander emphasized the GOE's strong preference that Estonian forces be attached to a U.S. unit in RC-South or RC-East. However, he noted, this is not a caveat and the contribution is not contingent on co-location with Americans. On the election platoon, Liflander noted it would be easier logistically for Estonia to send a platoon to RC-South than RC-East.

¶ 8. (C) MOD and MFA also asked for more details on Ref A request that Estonia provide IT experts and mentors to Afghanistan and a staff member to the RC-S Civil Military Planning and Coordination Cell. Specifically, MOD asked

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where Estonian IT experts would be used, e.g. would they be working with the U.S. mentoring mission (CSTC-A) that is already in place? Also, what is the requested timeframe for both requests.

¶ 9. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests additional information on Ref A requests for additional Estonian contributions. DATT will also convey this request through DAO channels.

¶ 10. (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: In announcing these additional assets at the NATO summit, the PM will discuss Estonia's long-term goal to field an OMLT as well as its company in Helmand. Estonia's decision to increase its troops in Afghanistan, while not reducing its troops in places like Kosovo, illustrates Estonia's fierce determination to remain an active partner of the U.S. in military operations. But the impact of the economic downturn is severe here, and this modest contribution may be the only new assets Estonia can manage this year. The GOE is prepared to accept domestic criticism of the decision to spend these scarce resources abroad while economic retrenchment goes on in just about every other facet of society. In order to support the GOE's decision and help them manage domestic support for Afghanistan (in keeping with Ref C priority in the strategic review to build a shared understanding of what is at stake in Afghanistan), we recommend a senior-level USG response as soon as possible to acknowledge the Estonian contribution.

DECKER